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INFORMATION SHEET NUMBER 1

JOHN VICTOR STOEN CASE

While we in the Department of State sympathize very much with Mr. and Mrs. Stoen in their efforts to regain custody of their son, regrettably there is little we can do to be of assistance. Neither the Department of State nor the courts of the State of California have the authority to enforce a U.S. court decision concerning the custody of John Victor as long as he is physically located outside of the United States. Child custody orders issued in the United States are normally not accepted for enforcement in another country on the basis of comity. While any American custody decision might be given evidentiary weight in the Guyanese proceeding, by no means will it be binding on that court.

Since the initiation of the custody suit in Georgetown, the Department of State and our Embassy in Guyana have been in close contact with the Stoens and their attorneys, both American and Guyanese. The Embassy has attended all court proceedings, when permitted to attend, and has assisted the Stoens in gaining access to Guyanese Government officials. The Embassy has regularly had conversations with the opposing attorneys and has spoken with Mr. Jim Jones, the head of the People's Temple. As Mr. Jones is also an American citizen and entitled to the same rights and protection as Mr. and Mrs. Stoen, the Embassy has been careful to avoid prejudicing the outcome of the dispute. It is the Embassy's responsibility to seek to ensure that the judicial outcome of the dispute results from a fair and impartial determination of the merits of the case, and all of our efforts are so directed.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY _____ DATE _____

RDS ☐ or EXEMPT. DATE _____

[illegible] REASON(S) _____

[illegible] MARKINGS ☐

[illegible] RELEASABLE ☐

[illegible] DENIED ☐

IA or IOI EXEMPTIONS _____